(REGP) through the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) for assisting the entrepreneurs in establishing village industry (VI) units, including the traditional leaf-cup/ plate making units, in rural areas and small towns with population upto 20,000 inlcuding those in the tribal dominated regions of the country, by availing of margin money assistance from KVIC and loans from public sector scheduled commercial banks, selected regional rural banks, cooperative banks, etc., for projects with a maximum cost of Rs. 25 lakh. Leaf-cup/ platemaking units are promoted under the Forest based industry (FBI) Group' of the village industries under the REGP. During 2006-07, margin money amounting to Rs. 1847.73 lakh was provided for various VI units under the FBI Group assisted during the year, generating 28,000 additional employment opportunities in the country. Of this, Orissa accounted for Rs. 52.77 lakh of margin money assistance with corresponding estimated additional employment of 1000 persons.

(c) REGP is a Central sector scheme and the approved grants for the scheme are released to the KVIC which, in turn, releases the funds (towards margin money assistance) to the banks against the projects sanctioned in each State/Union Territory (UT). During 2007-08, it has been targeted to assist the setting up of 1849 VI units under the FBI Group wth a margin money assistance of Rs. 2113. 13 lakh throughout the country, including 54 projects in Orissa with a margin money assistance of Rs. 61.90 lakh. 29 projects are reported to have been established in Orissa during 2007-08 (upto February, 2008), by utilizing Rs. 21.32 lakh of margin money assistance.

Regulating the Act of 1961

887. SHRI MATI SUPRIYA SULE: Will the Minister of MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) whether moving to liberalize small scale industries, Government is all set to remove a restrictive clause in 1951 law that prevented non-SSI players from setting up small units;

(b) if so, whether the number of items reserved for small-scale industries would remain the same at 114 but the restrictive clause would go;

(c) if so, by what time Government is considering to regulate the Act of 1961; and

(d) to what extent it would be helpful for small scale industries?

THE MINISTEROF MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES(SHRI MAHAVIR PRASAD): (a) The Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, has laid the draft order regarding resciding of Notification No. 857(E) dated 10 December, 1997 and subsequent amendments made thereto on the Table of the two Houses of the Parliament.

(b) The number of products reserved for exclusive manufacture by Micro and Small Enterprises is presently 35.

(c) and (d) The rescinding of the Notification No. 857(E) and subsequent amendments made thereto would enable the MSMEs to access alternative sources to meet their credit/equity requirements for accessing modern technology and enhancing their competitiveness.

Bamboo and Cane Industry

888. SHRI KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: Will the Minister of MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that bamboo and cane products of North-Eastem Region are in great demands in international market;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action plan of the Centre to help small sector of North-Eastern Region to provide modern training to the artisans, living in abject poverty with a view to improve their economy along with the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SHRI MAHAVIR PRASAD): (a) and (b) Bamboo and cane products of the North-Eastern Region are being exported to different countries like Australia, Belgium, Canada, USA, Germany, Denmark, France, UK, etc., by several exporters from India. The main products exported are: Bamboo Bags, Bamboo flowers, Bamboo furniture, Mats, Musical Instruments, Bamboo frames, Sport Items, Cane sticks and other Handicarft items. The Quantum of exports of Bamboo and cane products from India in the last four years are:

Year 2003-04	Rs. 12.39 crore
Year 2004-05	Rs. 14.18 crore
Year 2005-06	Rs. 17.28 crore
Year 2006-07	Rs. 24.85 crore

(c) Different agencies of the Government of India provide training to the artisans involved in the manufacture of bamboo and cane products in the North-East. These include:

(i) The Office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), under the Ministry of Textile, is the leading organisation working for the development of Handicraft Sector including Bamboo and Cane Handicraft Products in the country from NER. They have taken up interventions in more than 10 Bamboo and Cane clusters in NER. Human Resource Development Scheme has been formulated to provide qualified and trained work force to establish strong production centres coupled with improved quality by using appropriate technologies processes and innovative designs to meet the present day international market requirement.

(ii) Cane and Bamboo Technology Centre (CBTC), Guwahati, also imparts training to the artisans for NER, CBTC in association with Ministry of Labour, Government of India, has developed a Month long course curriculum on Bamboo technology, which is recognised by Directorate General of Employment and Training Government of India. CBTC in association with the Directorate of Employment and Craftsman Training, Government of Assam, has introduced Bamboo Technology Course at Kokrajhar with World Bank assistance.

(iii) The Bamboo and Cane Institute at Agartala (Tripura) under the Ministry of Textile, Government of India, imparts training to the artisans for a period of six months with a stipend of Rs. 350/- per trainee per month with free hostel facilities.